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# FLYING RUMORS

BY

ROY DAVIS



# *Flying Rumors*



By  
*Roy Davis*

PS 3501  
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1922

**TO MY CO - WORKERS  
IN OUR  
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**



MAR - 3 1922

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## FOREWORD

Lucubrations for the degree of doctor of philosophy, American free verse, the German White Book, our Congressional Reports, and the Sunday newspapers, not to mention a thousand treatises on rhetoric and composition, have all been printed and published. Surely, then, *Flying Rumors* does not need to apologize for using the printed word.

You, dear, unsuspecting, possible Reader, who have to listen daily to your friend's gabble about "Babe" Ruth, Mary Pickford, or Billy Sunday, or who are subject to that deadly specimen of the genus *culex*, the after-dinner speaker, may at least comfort yourself with this: you can at your pleasure *shut up* FLYING RUMORS.

It is true that Shakspere never printed one line, but consider H. G. Wells! Can you make the obvious deduction? This preface cannot.

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**ROY DAVIS**  

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# FLYING RUMORS

*By*

ROY DAVIS

Parnassus, sacred seat, saw not these stanzas,  
Or Fuji-Yama's or Olympus' height;  
Grasshopper Hill, in Texas, Maine, or Kansas,  
Thy sandy slopes impel my glider's flight.  
My theme, though old as Adam, still commands as  
Much attention as a fresh flea bite:  
Pursuit of Happiness,—no happy theme:  
A Wilson Peace League or a Trotzky dream.

Pursuit of Happiness! a game of chance,  
The bane of writers, Milton, Wells, or Moses.  
Saint John reached Heaven on Patmos, in a trance.  
Old John L found it punching people's noses.  
Our Newport finds it in the newest prance,  
Old Metchnikoff swilled buttermilk in doses.  
A Hottentot is happy when he's lazy,  
A Bolshevik's chief joy is going crazy.

"Man wants but little here below," was said  
By Goldsmith, whose whole life proved it untrue.  
A little means the way you have been bred;  
A million's not enough if you need two.  
Man's endless wish for more, some claim instead,  
Marks him Earth's best production, (this means you).  
Since Standard Oil has given J. D. a billion,  
An income tax cuts short the needed trillion.

He has the billion, and it's that much more  
Which, added to the rest, makes big the sum  
Of all this nation's wealth, that goodly store,  
From which the *average* man can scrape the scum.  
Just work it out on paper, if you're sore:  
We average rich, so no one need feel glum.  
If your two legs seem scarce enough for you,  
Add centipede's to yours, divide by two.

The Socialists are fools, in fact they rail;  
They want the earth, they want what they have not.  
Their argument sounds like their empty pail:  
An empty stomach breeds an empty thought.  
What should we do if Standard Oil should fail?  
Chicago U. with kerosene was bought.  
If you're kept poor, perhaps your poverty  
May make a thesis for a Ph. D.

The world, in fact, is one great harmony;  
Snug in his niche each manikin must sit.  
If manikin and niche don't quite agree  
The trusts help Heaven to squeeze him in a bit.  
Don't whine, my child, the things that are should be,—  
If still he whines just spank the little chit.  
The towering "Singerhorn" greets swallows flying,  
But presses on its base on bed-rock lying.

If every man received his average share  
There'd be no rich, and, worse, no poor there'd be.  
We'd lose the golden glow the millionaire  
Feels when he gives his dole to charity.  
If at no time our buttocks need be bare,  
What had become of Andrew Carnegie?  
The fool and pauper each must play his part:  
One feeds your vanity; and one, your heart.



And if there is a moral here, it teaches  
 Mankind, mayhap, is not unlike a house:  
 The "wop" builds sewers, not from housetop preaches;  
 In other words, there's lion and there's mouse.  
 Hippocrates did not invent the leeches,—  
 He made them useful,—you may try the louse.  
 The Greatest Show on Earth, admission free,  
 Keeps in one cage the monkey, man, and flea.

And when the Miller on the River Dee  
 Found all his scratching would not let him rest,  
 He scrambled out of bed and cracked that flea;  
 Nor would you wait to hear a flea protest.  
 A hotel waiter strikes and by his plea  
 Delays a planked steak for a hungry guest.  
 The point of view makes Luther saint or sinner,  
 Br'er Rabbit wants his life; Br'er Fox wants dinner.

Real joy in life is found, as Eliot says,  
 By motor-men who run electric cars.  
 On "three per day" three joyous babes to raise  
 'Tween man and wife removes all family jars:  
 The sewer-digger for sheer joy should praise  
 The sewer filth, pick-axes, and crow-bars.  
 Hard manual work's the only thing that's funny,—  
 So sing the bees who gather in the honey.

If Eliot were given a pick to hack  
 His joyous living from a sewer drain,  
 Are you so sure his apothegms would smack  
 Of optimism, or could he refrain  
 From wanting of the wine of life a snack?  
 When hands grow calloused, callous grows the brain:  
 The silver lining of the cloud looks best  
 When contemplated over a white vest.

Perhaps, you say, if Eliot had a shovel  
He'd somehow make it into wings and rise;  
Or smash his way out of his lowly hovel;  
Or throw some sand in other climbers' eyes,  
And, like the hero found in any novel,  
Appear, the Lord knows how, up near the skies.  
Admit it so, but has it helped the case  
Of the poor, brainless Hodge who took his place?

Hodge is no worse, I grant, and Eliot, too,  
Glow in the ruddy crimson, Harvard Light:  
But what would Harvard dormitories do  
If there were not the sewers out of sight?  
And open sewer simply mars the view  
Of a green campus like a kind of blight:  
Who in his marble bath-tub talks of drains?  
So why mix Hodge's fate with Eliot's brains?

And my poor brains by facts get mixed up sadly;  
Bob Hunter says there are ten million paupers,  
Who with starvation's wolves each day fight madly;  
While New York's mayor and guests for champagne  
stoppers  
Can spend five thousand civic dollars gladly.  
Tom Lawson picks a million out of "Coppers";  
And eighty thousand babies, Spargo said,  
Died in New England last year lacking bread.

I must be more exact, that New York bill  
Includes cigars, and of the babes that died  
Some thousands starved in New York State, which will  
Prove what you please; you may yourself decide.  
For some folks think we should more microbes kill,  
And some folks would eugenics open wide.  
Pursuit of Pleasure is a madman's song  
With Right's sweet tenor drowned by deep bass Wrong.

To know just what is right and what is true  
 Has many answers, many disagree.  
 It may be wise to ponder on a few:  
 That may seem best to you; this, best to me.  
 The officers, the passengers, and crew  
 Trust in one ship when they put out to sea.  
 We'll ask the officers what course they lay,  
 And how they know they're steering the right way.

Pragmatic James had quite a brilliant theory,  
 But Pragmatism's not so very plain  
 That some small souls don't think it very queer he  
 Could never make "What to Believe" quite sane.  
 Believe in any damned old thing! We fear he  
 Inhibited whatever crossed his grain.  
 Old Pontius Pilate was no fool, in sooth,—  
 He called for no reply to "What is Truth?"

Professor Pratt claimed James was simply "nutty,"  
 A nincompoop, a ninnyhammer, ass.  
 We don't remember Pratt's exact terms, but he  
 Put James and Royce down in the idiot class:  
 Professor Royce declared what James has got he  
 Stole out of Kant and Schopenhauer en masse.  
 Which truth is true is rather hard to see,  
 But while they pondered each drew salary.

Well, that last stanza ought to be deleted,  
 It smacks of Bolsheviks and the blind.  
 Industrial Workers of the World are greeted  
 By hangman's halters for a state of mind.  
 So let the Swifts and Debs, now, pray be seated  
 Among the blest; forget what you might find.  
 We quench our thirst by whisky legislation;  
 Then why not legislate on all creation?

A book of *libre*, freak, eubistic verse,  
An icecream soda, Y. M. C. A. tang,  
A jazz band booming! Dear, would it be worse,  
To sing the dear, old world that Omar sang?<sup>3</sup>  
Sweat of the brow was marked as Adam's curse,  
E'en from the sea-*foam* Aphrodite sprang.  
Efficiency and correspondence schools  
Can give us more efficient, toiling fools.

They tell us we must work, I want to play:  
The sounding sea, the murmur of the bees,—  
It's not efficient down life's path to stray  
And watch the checkered shadows of the trees.  
Our nations need more tonnage under weigh,  
To carry cotton to the Southern seas.  
We're big, but then we ought to cut more figure,—  
Ad infinitum, bigger, bigger, bigger!

"Watch ye and pray!" so cries the Christian pastor,  
A dual duty many folks forget;  
For most to eat must work, or graft, or fast, or  
Find other ways to get in the world's debt.  
Long prayers in stone, like epitaphs, would last, or  
We might adopt the kind used in Thibet:  
A water-wheel there grinds out bread and prayer;  
Thibetans eat and pray e'en while they swear.

'Tis far too slow to count a rosary;  
One can't count beads as fast as one can sin.  
To water stocks, kiss Sappho's cheek, and be  
A public feeder at the public bin  
In one short day, would wear, we must agree,  
Out several strings of beads should one begin.  
To save a Wall Street broker one would need  
A forty-power prayer-wheel run full speed.

The Christian Scientist has a neat scheme,  
 By which he simply crushes all debate:  
 That two and two is four he calls a dream,  
 If it will add up better, call it eight.  
 He next will prove "Things are not what they seem,"  
 So Nothing's Something by this postulate;  
 And a large marble church is a good answer  
 To fools who argue prayer won't cure a cancer.

But then, why pray at all if there's no Hell?  
 If James is right and truth, utilitarian?  
 Self-love is what one needs to study well;  
 The Golden Rule beguiles now the barbarian,  
 Or, relegated with the creed and spell,  
 To by-gone days, suits students antiquarian.  
 Since answers are not found to Why, When, Where,  
 What matter whether one should pray or swear?

Though Christian Science proves that pains don't hurt,  
 Tooth-ache and Mumps are simply fairy tales,  
 And pills and powders only so much dirt,  
 For "God is Love" cures all our aches and ails;  
 Still from a pounded thumb-nail blood will squirt,  
 And to express one's thought all language fails.  
 Good Mother Mary Eddy state again  
 How baby's belly-ache comes from his brain!

But if at Christian Science one will flout,  
 A better or a worse he still must find:  
 To ever be continually in doubt  
 Shows an unsettled state your settled mind;  
 For some opinion every one must shout;  
 All run this race, ahead or far behind.  
 Can any searcher, by himself alone,  
 Find out the truth, or finding make it known?

Small people are absurd or simply sinners;  
Write your "I" large, don't whisper, shout, build big;  
Bryan, Dowie, Hohenzollerns, as beginners,  
Cut a large swath, idealized the pig.  
A piggish trait is common to most winners;  
Salome's dance *outstrips* a horn-pipe jig.  
A whale and minnow, to the common eyes,  
Have their importance measured by their size.

One has to get a nation's ear then hold it,  
And then his words are stamped as legal thought.  
Who thinks a fact is true because he told it,—  
Truth's a chameleon, he should be taught.  
A nation often listens if you scold it,  
And, child-like, oft by novelty is caught;  
But in the morning it may toss the ball  
That at high noon it will not touch at all.

Opinion's right if one can make it go:  
Polygamy was right in Salt Lake City,  
And Polyandry in Himalya's snow  
Is stamped approved; the Yankee Doodle ditty  
Was once this nation's song for high and low;  
A presidential joke is always witty:  
And Marshall or even Hylan is respected,  
If once he wins,—even Wilson—now rejected.

In politics the question we confuse;  
It is not war or Tariff or the Trust  
But whether II—— or II—— shall amuse  
The gaping public with a cloud of dust.  
For Bryan's theorems now all parties use,  
A winning candidate will prove them just.  
Ideas are not made or found by chance,  
But nations grow to them as boys to pants.

For customs, costumes, creeds,—all common things,  
 Change with the centuries, which plainly shows  
 That Heaven and Hell, laws, slang, and finger rings  
 Are neither right nor wrong, as some suppose.  
 Still every generation takes its flings;  
 The leaders lead where still it points its nose.  
 While Reason chooses hoop-skirt first, then hobble,  
 So will it call for this and then that bauble.

It follows, hence, that any task that's great  
 Makes great the men who boldly undertake it.  
 This Earth's so huge that in the aggregate  
 It's round or square as mathematicians make it.  
 If Peary marches to the North Pole straight,  
 Then Doctor Cook in his Igloo can fake it;  
 And if it comes to argument and theory,  
 It needs much common-sense to favor Peary.

Some things require an answer, No or Yes:  
 We can't ignore the tooth-ache and the sun.  
 Our theories whether right or just a guess,  
 Are still the means by which the world is run.  
 Our peace terms were a joke or a success,  
 But Warren Harding bawled out "No" and won.  
 Hence, learn this truth: "It's wise to be dogmatic,"  
 And wiser still, if you are autocratic.

The starving donkey, told of in the fable,  
 When placed between two luscious piles of grass,  
 Which one to eat up first was never able  
 To quite decide, and starved, well named an ass.  
 An empty stomach often will enable  
 An Epicure to eat what he would pass.  
 Your teeth or boot-heel cracks the hard nut shell,  
 I find a flat-iron does the work as well.

Is it not strange we still must judge mankind  
By the opinions that they *claim* to hold?  
The wildest raving of the wildest mind  
Some men believe when once as true it's told.  
What sense can one in Swedenborgian find?  
"The Holy Ghost and Us," the Mormon Fold?  
From every point lines run to every place;  
Produced forever, they run into space.

The mayor of Nashua made the nation giggle;  
One full-moon night he turned out all the light,  
And hoped the Brown-tail moths would higgle-piggle  
Fly to the moon with all their main and might.  
No more on Nashua's elms worms would wriggle,  
Though other towns should still receive the blight.  
If all New England had done just the same,  
He might have killed the moths and gained great fame.

If all Vermont had turned their lights out too,  
And Massachusetts followed him with Maine,  
His scheme had been approved by me and you;  
For numbers help to prove ideas sane.  
Truth may seem false when backed by just a few,  
False may seem true if it can numbers gain.  
This moony scheme paused for the nation's word  
To make it sensible or just absurd.

But some one laughed, the Boston Transcript smiled,  
The cackle spread, New England joined the chaff;  
The nation's laughter straight the scheme exiled.  
E'en Jove himself might dread a nation's laugh.  
A Dewey cheered today is next reviled  
A joke's a Kaiser on a six-legged calf.  
Oh might this nation smile from sea to sea,  
And make La Follette just one huge Tee-hee.



If Nashua's Mayor had proclaimed the first  
 The mona-sex conception of a child,  
 Or claimed a new-born babe with sin is cursed  
 And ere it knows to sin it's sin-defiled,—  
 Oh what a storm on Nashua's Mayor had burst!  
 He'd been a second outcast Oscar Wilde.  
 What though the earth is round, we now declare?  
 Our fathers thought it flat,—perhaps it's square.

Why trouble one another with belief  
 Beyond the realm of time and place and fact?  
 If in a Heavenly Hope *you* find relief  
 Don't try to make *me* on that notion act.  
 Darwin or Balfour next will bring to grief  
 A hundred dogmas, e'en the most compact.  
 Truth, adding ever, grows as old Time flies;  
 Today the truths of yesterday are lies.

The Past was real when yesterday was "Now,"  
 And palpitated in its heyday bloom.  
 Truth well may stoop to kiss that dead, cold brow,  
 But need not follow to the clammy tomb.  
 Even to the Lover Nature can't allow  
 His dearest dead to grace his bridal room.  
 Rameses Great ruled Egypt in his might,  
 A mummy now, he's but a curious sight.

Long since Rameses went to Ra and Thoth;  
 Across the Silent Lake he's anchored fast.  
 Perhaps he found his guide-book out a jot;  
 Your Baedeker may turn out wrong at last.  
 The Jews thought Moses gave the facts they sought;  
 The Moslems on the Koran their hopes cast.  
 I think these guide-books largely fabrication;  
 No tourist e'er returned with information.

I've wandered farther than the Brown-tail flew;  
But, somehow, it is hard to state my meaning.  
When one has sifted out the false and true  
Most people seem to think he has been dreaming.  
The *naked* Truth's indecent when on view;  
We stop our ears when Nature starts in screaming:  
One's bed feels cosier, you may well suppose,  
When his kind Heavenly Father tucked the clothes.

Pity the child that can no father call.  
If we all be but foundling babes,—what then!  
What, if unnoticed on this earth we crawl!  
What, if they be but spawn that we call men!  
Ah, mel perhaps unwatched the sparrows fall!  
And whom does God's existence comfort, when  
His schemes include our pains, and that he should  
Call Evolution Love, and Evil Good?

Life is too short for hate and man too small  
To swell with windy pride, like Aesop's frog.  
Poor parasites, we cling to this old ball  
And rush through space, sans compass and sans log,  
Our whether and our whence unknown to all  
In some vast mechanism just a cog.  
A goose-step, strutting Kaiser, kissing Mars  
Has missed the humor of the midnight stars.

Caesar and Pompey, o'er-praised Alexander,  
Napoleon, Kaiser Bill, such serious folk,  
Their silly mouthings should not rouse our dander,—  
Just dig him in the ribs and crack a joke.  
Few creatures are more serious than a gander;  
E'en Kinglet George is harmless called a "bloke"  
When once a wholesome laugh consumes the Devil,  
Even Hell will rise up to a Heavenly level.

A sketch from life I'd truly like to see  
 Of this Creator, but I have a doubt  
 That yet he has been seen by you or me,  
 Or any artist studying here about.  
 There's many an ideal portrait, all agree,  
 But no two studies are alike throughout:  
 One old Italian master felt quite sure  
 He saw the Virgin in his paramour.

The Christian artist paints a grotesque creature,  
 Whose three dim faces make a larger one.  
 When I am studying to get clear that feature  
 It seems confused, the colors must have run:  
 And though the picture to the Christian preacher  
 Is just as clear as is the noon-day sun,  
 Perhaps it's like that fabled Eastern kind  
 Of crystal that reflects the gazer's mind.

In the World's salon, ranged as chance may fall,  
 Hang the hard tasks of many a master soul:  
 Confucius' grand lineaments of the All;  
 And Buddha's quiet, convoluting Whole;  
 Isaiah's concept, grand, divinely tall;  
 Saint John's weird vision on the mystic scroll;  
 And that bold, simple sketch, scarce understood,  
 Drawn by the Man of Nazareth with his blood.

(Ah, Man of Nazareth! might I hear thee talk  
 On such a little, common life as mine!  
 I'd rather with thee to Emmaus walk  
 Than see thee turning water into wine.  
 Not at my small ambitions wouldst thou mock,  
 And thou wouldst link my puny life with thine.  
 I'm often weary gazing at the skies;  
 Oh, let me joke a bit, although time flies).

But hung with these, incongruous and obscene,  
In Mormon's face brute, sensual passions lurk;  
The master touches of the Galilean  
Are rudely caught in Mary Eddy's work;  
The gaudy daub of Dowie there is seen;  
The glowering fiend of the old Scottish Kirk;  
And that calm, world-wise face, whose every line  
Shows the Pope's touch both *simple* and sublime.

Still hangs one canvas, old as Babylon,  
Old when Cathay was young, old as man's thought.  
The unfettered soul who touched it first was gone  
Before the God-Hope was a common lot.  
When Plato passed a rude outline was done,  
And Darwin's stroke made clear the face he sought  
But James, though working with a finer touch,  
Has, so far, left the picture one great smutch.

Enough of this: I'll call a spade a spade,  
And say religious theories, all compact  
Before the "Origin of Species" made  
Creation's dawn grow dim far ages back,  
Must be re-writ or on the book-shelf laid:  
Belief must square with scientific fact.  
On Galilee we hush the waves' turmoil  
By pouring from a can marked "Standard Oil."

Why in religion must we bear the weight  
Of all th' exploded theories of the past?  
We let our churches day by day relate  
Stories at which all reason stands aghast.  
Laws change like language with the changing date;  
E'en Aristotle's Physics could not last;  
Yet many a man who studies meteorology  
Still prays for rain by orthodox theology.

Man has been studying since we know not when  
 The great enigma of We-Know-Not-What:  
 If the enigma be beyond his ken,  
 How can he know of that which he cannot?  
 Or if his reason cannot know it, then  
 Unreasonable must be his future lot.  
 Reason, perchance, may stray when we go hence,  
 But here on earth hold still to common-sense.

With stout old cable Reason, anchor Hope,  
 Snug swings our vessel in this pleasant lea.  
 We'll heave the anchor home, not cut the rope  
 When our Commander signals, "Put to sea."  
 Sun, moon, or stars will shine, why need we grope?  
 Our ship's well found, so cast the broad sails free.  
 No hardy sailor shuns the ocean wide,  
 Nor need we fear Eternity's strong tide.

"This view," the Church cries, "is materialistic,  
 Man's soul requires the need of revelation;  
 To reason add the wisdom spiritualistic;  
 In God alone is found our true salvation."  
 But I will hold to facts and shun the mystic;  
 Facts, facts, and facts alone give explanation.  
 Without more facts where is the certainty  
 That man has claims on Immortality?

"This very word 'immortal,'" some object,  
 "Proves that the fact exists somehow, somewhere."  
*Immortal* means *not mortal*, why inject  
 A meaning in the word fact finds not there?  
 The future holds the hope that we expect,  
 And clearer vision may this truth lay bare;  
 And truths may gather till the human mind  
 Some knowledge sure of the Eternal find.

Our fathers called a continent the World,  
But added next a new world to the old;  
Then learned the Earth a globe and found it whirled  
About the Sun, till next them science told  
That the great sun itself through space is hurled  
Towards other suns, and these again are rolled  
Through greater space, where distance nothing seems,  
And numbers grow as vague as thoughts in dreams.

These vaults of heaven have countless stars, and yet  
Few facts are known of one or many stars;  
Nor will it help Astronomy to get  
Imaginary ditches dug on Mars;  
And Lowell might be saner if he let  
The future learn what lack of facts debars:  
Gyrating mercury or a new glass eye  
May help our children into space to pry.

The Ptolemaic theory is discarded,  
Copernicus is open to rejection,  
And Euclid's laws are not so closely guarded  
But that Einstein to them may find objection.  
If Science clings to Falsehood she's retarded.  
If our Theology had an injection  
Of scientific serum, 'twould avail  
To cast up more than "Jonah and the Whale."

Man thought and dreamed for centuries of flying,  
But had to wait for Orville Wright's bi-plane;  
For centuries mankind has hoped that dying  
They should not die, but pass to life again.  
Buddhist or Christian, fools or wise are trying  
To build a theory that will stand the strain.  
Why in this wide and most important field  
Must sense, to nonsense; fact to fable yield?

One may for Wright or Zeppelin take Jules Verne,  
 And sail in fancy over land and seas;  
 And some may hope of Paradise to learn  
 From priests and prophets who their fancies please;  
 But if the aviators quickly spurn  
 What Science as sheer foolishness decrees,  
 Then surely those who seek the Future Life  
 Should to their creeds apply the pruning knife.

There is no harm in pure imagination;  
 Build as you please your Hell and Paradise,  
 But yet respect the laws of gravitation  
 If you must bring your castles from the skies.  
 If Nature knows from law no deviation,  
 Where is the fancy firmer base supplies?  
 Swing on, Old World, safe in unchanging laws,  
 And never once for pigmy Joshua pause!

Wriggley's Religion, Horlick's Malted Morals,  
 Unceda Faith, and Gorton's Boneless Creed,—  
 Each, by the maker praised and crowned with laurels,  
 Is thrust into the public maw with speed.  
 Infringement of the trade-marks causes quarrels:  
 A heavenly "pure-food law" is what we need;  
 But even Knox's oatmeal porridge would  
 Be better than this pre-digested food.

Deny that we of God have knowledge clear;  
 Deny that Christ is anything but man;  
 Deny of Heaven the hope and Hell the fear;  
 And doubt the universe a God-like plan,—  
 Would anything be lost that we hold dear?  
 Primordial force will on as best it can:  
 Love lips will kiss and seasons greet the sun  
 When our beliefs are lost and our race run.

Much mused Chaldea on the starry sky,  
The sands have buried Ur, the stars still shine;  
Though Jove was throned upon Olympus high,  
The mystic mount now pastures peasants' kine;  
To the great sun the Aztec raised his cry,  
His morning beams break on no Aztec shrine.  
Unstained forever stands the eternal glass,  
Reflecting nations as the ages pass.

Before the mirror pigmies mow and chatter,  
Or scared at their own image stand in awe.  
One little wretch the clear, deep glass would smatter  
By flinging filth from his small, dirty paw.  
A little maniac would the mirror shatter,  
But still it stands unstained, without a flaw.  
Could the poor gazer grow divine, all-wise,  
A God-like image then might greet his eyes.

Uncounted ages scarce have taught the race  
To know itself in body and in mind.  
Man yet triumphant over time and space  
May know the truth and know it unconfined.  
Our greatest myst'ries may seem common-place  
When rolling years have left them far behind:  
Our forbears, à la Darwin, no less knew  
Of present truths than future truths do you.

Not unto those star-watchers of the night;  
Not unto us who know that night is done;  
But for the child that wakes with morning light  
Shall in full glory shine the effulgent sun.  
We learn each hour more of wrong and right,—  
Push on in faith, the fight may yet be won:  
And aeons hence, in spring-time, flowers will bloom,  
And Love and Life be glad above our tomb.



The Gentle Reader asks us our intention,  
 If still he's gentle and is yet awake.  
 He thinks we rail at everything we mention,  
 And designate what we dislike a fake.  
 The doctor to disease must give attention:  
 A wrong is often simply a mistake.  
 "Whatever is, is right," is truth that lacks  
 The backing of plain common sense and facts.

One need not be a Socialist to claim  
 The Guggenheims want much that most have lacked:  
 One need not be an Atheist to blame  
 The Church that states a miracle as fact;  
 Nor are men Anarchists who think it shame  
 Our tariff law by gold and greed is backed.  
 Since Common-sense proves Paladino faking,  
 Perhaps there's common sense, too, in muck raking.

This good old World is full of good for man.  
 Health, food, and clothes, with leisure, is enough;  
 And Common-sense long since drew up a plan  
 Which anyone may follow in the rough.  
 A dose of Fletcherism's better than  
 A dose of Pills for those who eat and stuff.  
 Play Golf, not Poker, water drink and then  
 Add "Peace on Earth and right Good-Will to men."

Peace on this Earth, Good-Will to all Mankind  
 Still sounds the sweetest song to mortal ears.  
 Our earth-born race must on the old Earth find  
 Its present joys and future hopes and fears.  
 It's still the greatest feat of human mind  
 To help the needy, dry the orphan's tears.  
 Health, food, and leisure most of men will prize  
 As pleasant prelude to a Paradise.

And if a star-dust theory you must find,  
    (Jove, Allah, Zeus, or Wells' composite mess)  
Reach out through space and time with eager mind,  
    Nor fear to hope what Einstein can't express.  
But never leave Old Earth too far behind  
    Time never makes Eternity the less,  
If we can only open up our eyes,  
Mayhap we'll find our Globe near Paradise.

And if the Earth is not a paradise,  
    It is the best that man has ever known.  
The dreamer who on Heaven fixed his eyes  
    Fell in a ditch by stumbling o'er a stone.  
For just plain common-sense our misery cries;  
    The Future for the Present can't atone.  
Our greatest minds would better ponder well  
Ryan's "Living Wage" than whether there's a Hell.

And thus "Pursuit of Happiness," my theme,  
    "Still like the circle bounding earth and skies,"  
Now there to you and here to me may seem,  
    "Allures from far and as I follow flies."  
But to the ocean comes at last the stream;  
    On the horizon Truth at last will rise.  
Writ on the goal where all their searchings cease  
Mankind will read, "Good-Will, to all Earth Peace."



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